

T W O ①
ADDRESSES

TO THE
RELIGIOUSLY-DISPOSED:

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY
UNITARIAN COLLECTION

RELATING

- I. To an Early and Continued Commemoration
of the Death of CHRIST, at his Table.
 - II. To the Evidences of a Gracious Hope.
-

Written at the desire of an Association of Dissenting Ministers, of the Counties of Suffolk and Norfolk, united together for the promoting the Interests of Religion in the Assemblies under their Pastoral Care, and in those to which their Influence may reach.

L O N D O N:

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T H E
P R E F A T O R Y E P I S T L E.

*To the Congregations of PROTESTANT
DISSENTERS, in the Counties of
Suffolk and Norfolk, belonging to
the Association whose last Meeting
was held at DEBENHAM, Suffolk,
October 1. 1777.*

Professed Disciples of the Lord Jesus,

FOR such I esteem you All to be,
even those among you that
never ratified their Baptismal Consecration to God, nor have made any
farther Profession of the Religion of
Jesus than those that, in the Ancient
Church, were distinguished by the
name of *Hearers*, and sometimes

Catechumen†. Your constant Attendance in Christian Assemblies, and that Reverence for the Lord Jesus which, on a variety of occasions, you profess, entitle you, I think, to the character of his Disciples, tho' unhappily you have not engaged in those Solemnities, which it is requisite you should, to denominate you such in the completest sense of the word—*the giving up yourselves to the Lord, and then unto his Ministers and Churches in sacred Fellowship, according to the Will of God**, uniting yourselves with the Servants of Christ in *Commemorations of his Death*, and in *watching over one another* for mutual instruction, edification, and comfort. Permit me then to address you on this Subject: which I do not only, I hope, from a sincere desire to promote the honour of him whom I serve in the ministry of the Gospel, and your spiritual profit and advantage; but in consequence of the unanimous

† See Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, B. 10. Ch. 2. Section 3.

* 2 Cor. viii. 5.

animous desire of those of your Ministers whom I met at *Debenham*, towards the close of the last Year.

It is the Custom, you know, among us, in these associated Meetings, after the Solemnities of *Public Worship* are over, for your Ministers and the Leading Persons of your Assemblies to converse together, on the Affairs of *our Churches*, and such other particular occurrences as claim our notice, as Well-wishers to the Prosperity of the *Churches of Christ in general*. In that meeting at *Debenham*, one of your Ministers, who had long been pained by seeing several *very serious* persons, belonging to the Assembly under his care, neglect that *Confession with the Mouth, which, in consequence of their believing with the Heart, they ought to have made**, expressed his desire that a *Letter* might be drawn up on *this Subject*, mingling Reasonings and Expostulations together, as the nature of the case might require; in which All his Brethren that were present concurred, though perhaps no Assembly

* Rom. x. 10.

bly among us exhibited such remarkable instances of Neglect, as that to which he stands related : and as I happened to be the eldest of these Ministers, they, on the account of Age, devolved that task upon me.

Let me then with great Seriousness and Affection address you, my Friends, on the point of early commemorating the Death of Christ, according to his command, in the First place ; and then, in the second, on the Evidences of a well-grounded Hope, of your having been brought to obey the Gospel, in such a manner, as that you *may*, and *ought* to attend these Commemorations of the Death of *Christ* ; the want of a clear discerning of them being, I apprehend, the principal cause of Neglect in most of those we would wish to introduce into our Churches. Receive then, Christians, with attention and practical regard, the words of exhortation, which are addressed to you from an earnest desire to bring you to a due conformity to the Precepts of the Gospel ; but which I should hardly have taken upon me to have

have done, *in this manner*, had it not been the earnest desire of your Ministers, attended with such particular circumstances, that I have been led to apprehend I could not omit this service, without failing in that respect that is due to the *Calls of Providence*.

Many excellent and lively Addresses on these subjects have been drawn up and printed; but it was supposed by my Brethren, that something written by one of *your Ministers*, for *your immediate service*, and inscribed to *you*, mingled also with such circumstances, if any should occur, as had a more *direct relation to you*, might be more effectual, than papers published many years ago, or by persons of whom you had no knowledge, though, in their own nature, more *masterly performances*.

As to those papers that relate to the Evidences of a gracious Hope, I have selected some passages from a similar work, drawn up in the last century, by one of the *Ejected Ministers* of the County of *Suffolk**, for
whose

* The Rev. Samuel Manning, M. A. of Emanuel College, Cambridge, and afterwards Minister of *Walpole*, who published his *Discovery of Sincerity and Hypocrisy*, in 1675.

whose memory some among us may have a great regard; but that performance was too diffusive, according to the fashion of the Age in which it was written, and at the same time I found would admit of *improvements*, possibly some *corrections*: I have therefore only here and there introduced some particulars, and where I have done so, I have distinguished these paragraphs, by the usual mark, as *quotations*. The *variations* I have ventured upon, will, I hope, appear to be equally founded on Scripture, with those passages which I have taken from this devout writer of former times.

If these papers should be made useful to promote the knowledge of what is Duty, and a greater conformity among us to the precepts of Christ, and particularly in the *rising generation*, it will give an exquisite pleasure to,

My dear Friends,

Your faithful Servant, for Jesus' sake,

THOMAS HARMER.

WATESFIELD, near Bury St. Edmunds,
Suffolk, April 15th, 1778.

ADDRESS I.

RELATING TO AN EARLY, CONTINUED, AND
STEADY ATTENDANCE ON THE TABLE
OF THE LORD.

** * * * ** HAVE received of the Lord that which
** * ** I ** ** also I delivered unto you, says St.
** * ** Paul||, that the Lord Jesus, the night
** * * * ** in which he was betrayed, took bread :
And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and
said, Take, Eat ; this is my Body, which is broken
for you : This do in Remembrance of me. After
the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had
supped, saying, This Cup is the New Testament
in my Blood : This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in
remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this
Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's
Death 'till he come.

It is visible from hence, that attending on
these Commemorations of the Death of Christ
is the express Command of him whom we pro-
fess to honour, as the Great Apostle of our Pro-
fession * : Shall we dare to disobey his Orders ?
He

He is the Prophet whom Moses commanded all *his* followers to hear, under the penalty of being destroyed†: consequently to obey him as to this Commemoration. But is this Obedience incumbent only on the Converted Jews? St. Paul, you see, to whom the Gospel of the *Uncircumcision* was committed*, or who, in other words, was sent as a Preacher and Apostle and Teacher of the *Gentiles*, in Faith and *Verity*†, delivered this as an order of Christ to a Church of the *Gentiles*||, to be observed by them, which he would not have done, he that contended so earnestly against *their* being brought under the yoke of Jewish Observances, had it been only a Jewish Ceremony. It was then no Jewish Rite, but a Precept belonging to the New Testament, consequently obligatory upon All sincere Converts to Christ *then*, and *through All Ages*, since the New Testament is the last of the Dispensations of God, and designed to reach to the End of Time: consequently obligatory on us of this *country*, and *this generation*.

The circumstances attending the appointment of this Rite, mentioned by the Evangelists, in their account of the transactions of our Lord, sufficiently shew, that though it immediately followed the *Passover*, (a Jewish Solemnity,) it was no part of it; but the declaration made by St. Paul, which I have set down at length, puts it out of all doubt.

I men-

† Deut. xviii. 15, 19. Acts iii. 22, 23. * Gal. ii. 7. † 1 Tim. ii. 7.

|| 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried unto these dumb Idols, &c.*

I mention this, because it is very well known, that some professed Christians in our Country* neglect this Observation, under the notion of its being a Jewish Solemnity, though there is so little foundation for this thought, that I cannot wonder, when I recollect the having heard, that one of the most worthy characters among them, in this part of the country, was very uneasy at the omission of it among his Friends. But be that as it may, it is indisputably a precept of the Lord Jesus, relating to the New-Testament dispensation, and as such it ought to be observed among us, and these holy Commemorations kept up with *great care*. "He that hath my commandments," says Christ, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," John xv. 21; and again, v. 15, "If ye love me, keep my Commandments."

But *when*, it may be asked with eagerness, doth this Obligation commence? I would answer, as soon as we are brought to believe in Jesus with the Heart, with the Mouth we are to make this confession of that belief†, how soon soever this may be effected; for this mode of confessing him which Christ has enjoined, he requires of *All his Disciples*, Young as well Old: "Drink ye All of it," Matt. xxvi. 27. Consequently, as soon as we have attained a *general Knowledge* of the Nature of the Religion of Jesus, a *firm Conviction* of its Truth, and have felt in a *prevailing degree* its purifying moral Energy, we so believe in Jesus, as that we ought to be admitted to this token of Discipleship. This gracious effect appears to have been produced in

* The people called *Quakers*. † Rom. x. 9, 10.

in some very early : and we have had instances of some admitted into our Churches, *under Fourteen*, who have honourably maintained their character for Religion to the end of life. How happy to be early truly religious, and to continue faithful unto death !*

The *most distinct* account of an early, but real adopting of a Religious character, which the Scriptures give us, is, I think, in the history of *Josiah*, king of Judah, *who began to seek after the God of David his father, in the sixteenth year of his Age, and entered on the arduous work of a national Reformation in the twentieth*, according to 2 Chron. xxxiv, 1—3. How happy, if our Youth were commonly brought as early in life under true impressions of Religion, and so as publicly to avow them in the manner the Gospel prescribes ! However nothing obliges us to consider this time of life as the earliest admissible age : *Josiah* is celebrated, and justly celebrated for the earliness of his zeal, but he is not produced, in the sacred writings, as a proof that the human Soul is incapable of an earlier knowledge of Religion in a sufficient degree, an earlier conviction of its truth, or an earlier capacity of making its determination and choice. It may be earlier without doubt, and *the more early the more honourable*, where the Soul is truly fixed for God.

How astonishing, in this view of things, must the Arrangements of the Established Church, as to this matter, appear ! Sixteen is the *latest* age allowed to any to be absent from the

* Rev. ii. 10.

the Holy Communion, according to its Constitutions*. But are young persons of the age of sixteen *always*, or even *commonly*, such as the Gospel requires the Members of the Churches of Christ to be? Have not great numbers of those that afterwards became honourable Professors of the Religion of Jesus, lamented over the follies and vanities of that time of life, and its extreme unsteadiness, with bitter sorrow? Are young persons to be *hurried* into Church-Fellowship only to be presently *cast out* again? Josiah was at that age truly pious, but the manner in which it is mentioned by the sacred writer shows, it was rather extraordinary: the making this then the latest time of life, at which young persons were permitted to be absent, must appear very strange. But however improper such a constitution may be, an *Early* attendance on this Solemnity, in consequence of a sincere dedication of ourselves to God, should be an object of *holy Ambition*, nor are we at liberty to postpone it *as long as we please*.

If this precept is obligatory on the Young, it requires us to continue the practice through life. One of your Ministers has complained, that a certain Professor among us did maintain, that it is enough, in consequence of this injunction, *once in our life-time* to attend this Commemoration. How contrary is this to the apprehensions of St. Paul! He supposed not

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* Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, of the year 1603. In those of 1571, all of 14 years of age are said to be obliged, by the Statutes and ecclesiastical Laws of this kingdom, to come to the Holy Communion.

only that Christians *would often* eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, 1 Cor. xi. 26; but affirms, that this frequency of doing it was involved in the account the Lord Jesus delivered to him, of this his precept, "He took the Cup when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my blood, this do ye, *as oft as ye drink it*, in remembrance of me," v. 25. Our Lord Jesus then supposed it was to be often repeated by them; and so it has been perpetually understood.

It is indeed amazing, that ever a *conceit* to the contrary should enter into any person's head. The less important *Commemorations* the scripture speaks of, were to be *often* repeated: the daughters of Israel went *yearly* to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, *four days* in a year*; the Memorial of the destroying Angel's passing over the houses of the Israelites in Ægypt was, every body knows, to be solemnly kept every year. Shall the Zeal of the damsels of Israel, to keep up the memory of Jephthah's daughter, exceed our regards to the Lord Jesus? Shall the shewing forth the Deliverance in Ægypt, in the days of Moses, be more frequently solemnized than the Deliverance Jesus has wrought out for us? Is this agreeable to the Spirit of St. Paul, who found the Love of Christ *constraining* him to express the most warm and grateful sense of his dying Grace||, and who determined to know, comparatively speaking, nothing but Jesus Christ, and *him crucified*‡? The Eastern Women, in the days of the Apostle, were wont to go to the graves

* Judges xi. 40. || 2 Cor. v. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

of their dead friends to weep§; and they shew their affection to them still after the same manner; but would a single visit be thought, by the inhabitants of that country, a sufficient testimony of Affection and Tenderness, when they continually see the females of their country, repairing once or twice a week, *to visit their tombs**? And is it possible to imagine the intention of our Lord, in giving the order, and of St. Paul in repeating it, sufficiently answered by doing it once in our lives, had not the word *often* been expressly set down in the account St. Paul has given of this precept?

If it is *often* to be repeated, then certainly *through life*, and as often as we have a *proper opportunity* for it, as the good people of former times have practised, remembering that we are to be faithful *unto death*, if we would receive the crown of life ||; that we are to do good, (good of all kinds assuredly,) as we have *opportunity*†; that we are not to be *slothful*, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promises‡.

To all this we are obliged, considering this Solemnity as enjoined by our Lord Jesus. But when we take in the consideration of the *circumstances* attending the injunction, we must doubly feel the energy of the order: it was in the night in which he was *betrayed*, the night *immediately preceding his death*, when he was taking a most *affectionate leave* of his Disciples, for all of whom in every age he was going *to die*,
B 2 the

§ John xi. 31. * See Russell's Nat. History of Aleppo, p. 113. || Rev. ii. 10. † Gal. vi. 10. ‡ Heb. vi. 12.

the just *for the unjust*: and is a precept so circumstanced to be treated with Coldness and Neglect? The words of a common dying friend or relation are wont to be heard with most affectionate attention, and obeyed with the utmost punctuality; and shall the dying Request of the *best of Friends*, of a *Prophet* of the Lord, of one *greater than a Prophet*, of Him to whom we owe *all our Hopes*, be disregarded? — But farther,

Secondly, Its advantage to ourselves and others ought not to be forgotten, when we are considering the *Motives* to induce us to attend this Solemnity. The Authority of Christ is and ought to be *sufficient*: but there are other *powerful*, though *secondary*, considerations.

First, This Commemoration must be extremely advantageous for the promoting our Sanctification, and our Comfort.

Bp. Hoadley, who has endeavoured to reduce our Expectations and our Hopes from this Solemnity to the *greatest Simplicity*, in a well-known book which he published on this Subject*, admits its being a powerful *moral* mean of producing important effects: the observation then of this Precept must, in this view, be of great consequence. But as he deduces this from *the nature of things*, not from any *express declaration* concerning it, may we not, in like manner, derive an hope of *particular exertions of divine Grace* on the heart, in the observation of this command of Christ, from its nature, though

* Entitled, A Plain account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

though no *express declaration* concerning it should be producible, which the Bishop seems to require? If *Gratitude* is the great spring of Evangelical Obedience, the serious and devout recollection of Christ's dying for our Sins, must have a *moral energy* for the producing Obedience from principles of Love: so St. Paul found the *Love of Christ* constraining him, as judging that if one died for All, then were All dead; and that he died for All, that they which live should not, thenceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again*. And if the Influences of the Holy Spirit are not all of the prophetic sort; if some of them are of the sanctifying kind, and requisite to the common transactions of the Christian Life, of which a plain Christian that examines the New Testament will not easily doubt, (however some gentlemen of a metaphysical turn, that possess the unlucky art of perplexing the plainest truths, may controvert the point;) then I cannot but think we may expect to feel those purifying and comforting influences of divine Grace, as much or more in this solemn Commemoration as any other time, though there should be no *express declaration* of such a connexion. For, Did not our Lord Jesus join together his going out of the world by death and the coming of the Holy Ghost, in those influences of *different kinds* which his Gospel teaches us to expect, in his parting conversations with his disciples? "I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you,

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Sor-

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

“ Sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless,
 “ I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you
 “ that I go away: for if I go not away, the
 “ Comforter will not come unto you; but if
 “ I depart I will send him unto you.” John
 xvi. 5, 6, 7. If ever then we may hope to
 partake of the influences of *this Comforter*, we
 may, surely! expect to feel them when we
 commemorate Christ’s going away, and his
 dying that the Comforter *might come*. The
nature of the commemoration points out such a
 connexion. So when St. Paul assured some of
 the Disciples of John*, that the pouring out
 of the Holy Ghost on men, which was to take
 place in the last days, was begun, and in con-
 sequence of this they were baptized with the
 Baptism of Jesus, the *sensible proof* that they
 were indeed poured out was quickly felt, for
 laying his hand upon them, the Holy Ghost
 came on them, and they spake with tongues,
 and prophesied.

The Cup which Christ ordered to be drank
 is called, by St. Paul, the *Cup of Blessing*, 1st Cor.
 x. 16, the Cup over which God was solemnly
 blessed. Now since Christ in that parting Con-
 versation dwelt so largely on the coming of the
 Holy Ghost as the Comforter, must not that
 Promise of the Spirit have been one of the great
 subjects of Blessing, or Praise, in that transac-
 tion? and may not the feeling that that Pro-
 mise was not given in vain, be *more especially*
 hoped for then, though no express declaration
 of that kind may be to be found? Farther,
Blessing God for the Promise of his Holy Spirit
 can

* See Acts, xix. 1—6.

can hardly be supposed to be practised, with *due Solemnity*, without *praying* for such influences, as peculiarly suit the circumstances in which the Suppliant is supposed to be at such a time, and the Holy Spirit is expressly promised to be given to those that pray for his influences, Luke xi. 13.

Attending this Holy Commemoration ought to be understood then to be *particularly* advantageous; as such a calling to remembrance operates *morally* on the Soul, and as it may justly be believed to be also attended with the *influences of the Spirit of Grace*, in a *distinguishing manner*.

It must be advantageous too, as an Admission to the Table of the Lord is an introduction into more intimate Fellowship with Good People, who are thereby engaged to watch over us for good, to warn us when acting improperly, and to comfort us when oppressed with Sorrow or Temptation: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together," says St. Paul to one of the ancient Churches, "and edify one another, even as also ye do.—Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render Evil for Evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to All men.*"

How precious are the Advantages of Church-Fellowship! but that and commemorating the Death of Christ are intimately united, and if we neglect the last, we drop our pretensions to the first: *Because there is one Bread, we being many*

* 1 Thess. v. 11, 14, 15.

many are one Body: For we being many partake of one Bread. This seems to be the thought, and the true argument of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 17, which is rendered rather darkly in our version, *For we being many are one Bread, and one Body: for we are all partakers of that one Bread.* Partaking then of that Bread, when we grow up to years of discretion, and enjoying the advantage of Church-Fellowship, go, we see, together.

Our own spiritual profit and advantage is the first thought that occurs under this head undoubtedly, but there are other considerations that deserve attention, and will make an impression on a well disposed mind; I add therefore,

Secondly, That the coming to the table of the Lord is of great consequence, for the encouraging the ministers of Christ, in that difficult work in which they are engaged, and comforting his churches.

The business of the ministers of the gospel is to *preach Christ, to warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus* *: now they are certainly very far from this perfection that observe not an express command of Christ, given in his dying moments, and which is a distinguishing part of christian profession. To see then such numbers, who are educated under their instruction, and attend on their ministrations from year to year, remain in the imperfect state of non-communicants, cannot but give pain

* Col. i. 28.

pain *in itself*; and more so as the reason they assign for the neglect is, commonly, a consciousness, or at least fear, of their not being brought to the Repentance and Obedience the Gospel requires: how distressing is this to the faithful ministers of Christ, to see those they are continually teaching and warning, in order to present them *perfect* in Christ Jesus, quietly remaining in this *very imperfect* state, instead of giving *diligence* to make their calling and election sure§!

It is grievous too to the Churches of Christ: They see their Members advancing apace in life, they see numbers of them grown venerable by age, and who after having been highly useful, by their experience, and growing sanctification, are apparently ready to be dismissed by the Lord Jesus to the church above; they see others in the most active part of life, from whom they hoped for many services still to come, removed out of the world in the midst of their usefulness; and while the hand of God is thus diminishing the sacred societies to which they belong, those that *should* fill up these vacancies stand motionless among the Candidates for Church-Fellowship, and even seeming to forget they are *Candidates*, and that any thing lies before them unaccomplished, which may be justly expected from them. *If there be no Resurrection of the Dead*, says St. Paul, *what shall they do that are baptized for (or in the room of) the Dead, if the Dead rise not at all? why are they baptized in the room of the dead †?* On the other

§ 2 Pet. i. 10.

† The Learned will, probably, recollect, this is the explanation given of this difficult passage by

other hand, if there be a Resurrection of the Dead to Immortality and Blessedness, how strange must be the neglect of those that ratify not the Baptismal Engagements of Early Life, by *filling up* the room of the Dead in Christ, holding forth this same divine Hope to the World, and entering into those methods of Preparation to meet a returning Lord which he has appointed: all which are done by coming to the Table of Jesus!

Be not slothful then, you that attend as Hearers in our Religious Assemblies, but be followers of them, who through Faith and Patience are gone before to inherit the Promises. ||

Not to do this is to grieve the Ministers of Christ; is to pain his Churches: and ought not both to be differently treated by you? *Obeys them that have the rule over you, saith the Scripture, or, those whom you profess to receive as your Guides, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with Grief: for that is unprofitable for you.** Let their watch over you be with joy, not with Anguish and Tears to see you neglect the Precepts of Christ, that will be injurious to you here and hereafter: it will weaken their hands in your Service now; and it will draw after it at least a diminution of your Joy hereafter.

What, says St. Paul, to one of the Churches of his time, *what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown*

Sir Richard Ellys, in his *Fortuita Sacra*, and will think that our course of reasoning in these papers does not make the explanation less probable.

|| Heb. vi. 12. * Heb. xiii. 17.

of Rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming? For ye are our Glory and our Joy †: but are you, my Friends, the Glory and Joy of your Ministers, that hold back from the Commemoration of the Death of him that died for the Sins of Men; nay, that draw back when they are affectionately taking you as it were by the hand, to conduct you to that blessed Solemnity? You their Glory and their Joy? no! you give them pain, for they lament your negligence; and you are a kind of Reproach to them, as if they had never taught you your duty, or as if their Ministry had no efficacy to persuade you to forsake your sins, and to consecrate yourselves to God.

The Pain this Neglect gives the Churches of Christ ought also to affect you: "We know," saith St. John, "that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren: —hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us: and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren." 1 Epist. iii. 14, 16. But how far distant are we from this holy *Heroism*, when we are *coldly* observing the Affliction of their Souls, when their numbers are diminishing; when we are carelessly consigning over these Societies to Dissolution and Ruin, so far as our neglect will bring on that sad event; and so far from quitting Life for the support of the interests of Religion in the world, that we will not give up our indolence and sloth, and take the requisite pains to determine, whether we have reason or not to hope we are such as Christ will
own

† 1 Theff. ii. 19, 20,

own as his Disciples, in that great future day of Decision which we profess to believe. For this is the *great avowed* cause of this common neglect, and most commonly the *real* one, as I shall hereafter have occasion to take notice.

Thirdly, Another Motive that ought to be mentioned here, is, the Impression that may be expected to be made on the Minds of the *irreligious part of the World*, from those solemn Professions of Subjection to Christ, that are wont, in *our Churches*, to precede an Admission to the Table of the Lord.

Where indeed it is the Practice to admit All, without difference, as soon as they come to a certain fixed age, whether *sixteen*, or any other year of early life, the Knowing and the Ignorant, the Moral and the Immoral, the Seriously-Disposed and the Thoughtless, I acknowledge this Motive vanishes. Nor is there any *material* difference, if the being able to answer the questions of a Catechism is made *essential*: for that at best may be only a proof of *Knowledge*, perhaps of nothing more than a *tolerable Memory*, not at all of *Virtue and Piety*, or any *appearance* of a desire to live to Christ, *who died for us, that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but unto him that died for us, and rose again*||. Such indiscriminate and promiscuous Admissions must make little impression, of a favourable kind, on the minds of men of Sense, may perhaps give disgust, and make them ready to fancy all profession of Christianity is only a thing of Course, and an outward Show, especially if these professions are attended with the indecent Precipitation

tation, Crowding, Want of preceding and subsequent Retirement, Meditation, and Prayer, and even open Intemperance, which have frequently, *in former times at least*, attended those Solemnities called among us Confirmations.

The description Monsieur Ostervald has given the world, of the manner of admitting the Young to the Table of the Lord, in the Churches of the Sovereign State of Neufchâtel and Vallangin, agreed upon by their Pastors, (and which he has placed near the close of that Catechism of his, which he dedicates to the Society in England for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts,) seems to be much more solemn and agreeable, though perhaps its form not unexceptionable; nevertheless where the Custom is to admit All in general as they grow up, the Impression that may be expected to be made is not so great, (as well as the thing not right in itself,) as where the manner of Procedure is more conformable to what was practised in the Apostolic Churches. In them persons were received into sacred Fellowship, *whose hearts the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by his Ministers**, *who declared they believed with all their hearts†*; *who professed Repentance‡*; *in whom a visible Alteration and Change was made, in those cases in which before they had visibly been Enemies of God by their Wicked Works§*; and who appeared, in a judgment of charity, *to be sincere in answering the various Interrogatories that were wont to precede Admission||*, or in other words were judged faithful to the Lord*. These things are represented in the New Testament

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* Acts xvi. 14, 15. † Acts viii. 37. ‡ Acts ii. 38.
§ Acts ix. 1—18. || 1 Pet. iii. 21. * Acts xvi. 15.

tament, indeed, as what were requisite in the Adult for an Admission to Baptism, which could not but most commonly happen at the *first* publication of the Gospel ; but the reasons that made these things requisite *then* in Admission to Baptism, and *now* in the case of the Baptism of the Adult, must make them requisite when persons ratify the Solemnities of their Baptism, and are admitted into *full* Communion with the Churches of Christ : for they are admitted to Baptism, it should seem, upon the charitable expectation and hope, that upon their growing up to years of Discretion, their religious Education would produce these Effects†.

And where they are produced from time to time, what effects may be expected to follow, and have in fact often followed, in the irreligious part of the world ? It leads them to think how profanely careless they have been of their Souls ; of the blessedness of being made New Creatures ; it gives hope that they too may be changed and renewed ; it excites them to implore divine influences ; to set themselves to think over matters in devout Retirement, and to strive to fix religious impressions on their minds : and in fact, many have, by these Examples, been wrought upon, and, to all appearance, have become real Converts to the Lord Jesus. Example, every body knows, operates very powerfully, and its energy has been

† Gen. xviii. 19, Which seems to explain the ground on which ~~his~~ Children and Servants were admitted to receive that Circumcision, which the preceding chapter gives an account of.

been felt in cases of this kind : so, anciently, when John Baptist came preaching Repentance, and when several were impressed and came to his baptism confessing their sins, what multitudes were touched, and how did Sorrow for Sin, and Zeal for a share in the consolations of the kingdom of the Messiah, whose discovery was thought to be approaching, diffuse itself through the whole country ! “ Then went out to him,” says St. Matthew, “ Jerusalem and “ *all* Judæa, and *all* the region round about “ Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, “ confessing their sins.” Ch. iii. 5, 6.

Neglecting then to make those Professions of Religion Christ has enjoined, we do not serve our generation according to the Will of God as we ought, and slip one opportunity of promoting the interests of religion in the world, which might, in many cases, be extremely beneficial to the Souls of Men.

“ What can be the Causes of this Negligence “ in our Assemblies ? ” some may be ready, possibly, to ask, with some warmth, after having read the preceding pages. Many, it may be answered, may be, have been enumerated, and have *actually* had an unhappy operation on men’s minds.

1. The *Danger of unworthy receiving* has frightened away many, especially in some former times, when the meaning of those words of St. Paul, “ Whosoever shall eat this Bread, “ and drink this Cup of the Lord *unworthily*, “ shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of “ the Lord—he that eateth and drinketh *un-* “ worthily, eateth and drinketh *Damnation* to
C 2 “ himself,

“ himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body†,” was not so well understood, as of later times. I remember an aged person, many years ago, who was overwhelmed with distress on this account: she in the days of Charles II. had once, and I think she said but once, attended the Table of the Lord, not, she was conscious, from a principle of Religion, but the terror of being presented in the Spiritual Courts if she neglected, as she was then just turned of sixteen; this embittered all her after life, and involved her in a distress little short of Despair. And as she was a person of a weak understanding, nothing that was said to her seemed to give her any relief: though it is *evident* to any one that reads the passage with tolerable understanding, that the unworthy receiving, the Apostle speaks of, was a *gross* profanation of this sacred solemnity, eating the bread of Commemoration of our Lord as if it were mere common bread, and drinking of the Cup in the like trifling manner; as also that the *damnation*, or judgment (as the margin reads it,) relates to the chastisements of God in this world, illness, and sometimes unto death, not the destruction of the Soul in hell, the Apostle saying, *for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, or are dead*||. The words of the Apostle then may justly make us thoughtful, and careful to stand as far as may be from any tendency to such a profanation, but *profanely* to disregard a positive precept of Christ, in order to avoid a *profanation* in celebrating it, is a strange way of remedying the disorder.

There

† 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. || ver. 30.

There was *some danger* to the Jewish High-Priest, of his incurring death, when on the day of Expiation he went into the most holy place—
 “ He shall put the Incense upon the fire before
 “ the Lord, that the Cloud of the Incense may
 “ cover the Mercy-Seat that is upon the
 “ Testimony, *that he die not,*” Lev. xvi. 13;
 and again Exod. xxviii. 35, “ It ” (that is the
 Robe of the Ephod) “ shall be upon Aaron to
 “ minister: and his Sound shall be heard,
 “ when he goeth in unto the holy-place before
 “ the Lord, and when he cometh out; that
 “ he *die not.*” And we find by the Jewish
 Writers that they were apprehensive of the danger,
 and that the people were wont to attend
 the High-Priest back to his house, at the close
 of that day, with great joy, because he was
 come alive out of the Holy Place*; but no
 mention is made of their ever omitting that
 Service, on account of the Awfulness attending
 it. It made them thoughtful, but induced not
 a Neglect of this Institution: how much just-
 er this management of those that lived under
 the Old Testament, than that of such under
 the New, who on pretence of the Awfulness
 of the transaction, neglect a positive injunction
 of the Lord Jesus, and, so far as it dependeth
 on them, would bring it into *disuse*! The Jews
 were impressed with Awe, but they considered,
 or might consider, that it was a *Mercy-Seat* be-
 fore which the High-priest appeared; and has
Mercy nothing to do with the Memorial of the
 Death of Christ? is it right to consider it as a
 Solemnity of overwhelming Terror?

C 3

2. It

* Lightfoot's Works, vol. i. p. 964, or as the
 page ought to have been numbered, 974.

2. It is not however, it may be said, *absolutely necessary to Salvation*, and that thought may sometimes induce persons to neglect it. It would not, certainly, be entertaining the most worthy notions of the Dispensations of God, to suppose any *positive Rite*, any thing of an indifferent nature in itself, however sacred the Ceremony might be, so essential to Salvation, that in no case whatever it could be obtained without it; but doth it therefore follow that Ritual Injunctions, such as the Lord's Supper is on all hands acknowledged to be, are of little importance? about which we need not give ourselves any concern? The keeping up this Solemnity has been shown to be of great Use; and if it had not been shown, the consideration of a divine Command, surely! engages to obedience. If we are in circumstances where we cannot possibly observe the Precept, (and such may be imagined,) there certainly can be no *Guilt*; if otherwise, and there be something *criminal* in the Neglect, yet a merciful God may, and we have reason to believe will, pity and forgive the Prejudices and Mistakes of those that are Upright in the main: but are we therefore to trifle with his Injunctions? There is something very instructive, with respect to this point, in the history of Hezekiah: The Passover was one of the most solemn ceremonial appointments of the Mosaic Law, and Hezekiah was extremely zealous for the Reformation of his kingdom, but there was some *irregularity* attending the first celebration of the Passover, it should seem, in his time—"For," says the sacred historian, "a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and

“ and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had
 “ not cleansed themselves ; yet did they eat
 “ the Passover, *otherwise than it was written* :
 “ but Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, the
 “ Good Lord pardon every one that prepareth
 “ his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his
 “ fathers, *though he be not cleansed according to*
 “ *the Purification of the Sanctuary*. And the
 “ Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed
 “ the People,” 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.
 We cannot be surprized at the Mercy granted
 to these Israelites, who failed in exactness as
 to the fulfilling this ceremonial injunction of
 God, but who were in truth religiously dispos-
 ed ; but would Hezekiah have prayed for them,
 if in *after* Passovers they should have neglected
 the purification the law required ? or if he had,
 is there reason to think God would have heard ?
 It is evident from the event, the Purification
 referred to, was not *absolutely essential* to accep-
 tance with God ; but it was not however to be
carelessly neglected.

3. The *Commonness of the Neglect* is another
 plea that some have made.

Which is nothing else than saying, in other
 words, Because others do not that honour to
 the dying of the Lord Jesus that ought to be
 done, therefore neither will we. This is the
 construction that justly may be put on this
 excuse ; but the bare proposing it is enough to
 make every one start that has any feeling of
 Gratitude to his Redeemer. And without put-
 ting it in this light, in which it certainly is to
 be placed, it is surprising that it should ever be
 used by such as find it a command in the book
 of

of God, *not to follow a Multitude to do Evil**.
How much nobler the holy singularity Milton
describes, in the character of the Seraph *Abdiel*!

—————faithful found

Among the faithless, faithful only he :
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshaken, unseduc'd, untterrify'd,
His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his zeal.
Nor *Number*, nor *Example with him wrought*
To swerve from truth†.

I am happy to add, we have had instances in
our assemblies, and *lately too*, of some, that
from the fewness of those that unite together
to commemorate the Death of Christ, have had
their Zeal animated to distinguish themselves
in his cause, instead of deriving any argument
from thence to sooth themselves in it's neg-
lect.

4. An ill-directed desire of being *secret and*
concealed in our practice of Religion, is another
thing that causes many to absent themselves
from this Solemnity.

It is certain there are some that love to make
a great shew of their Religion, such were the
Jewish

* Exod. xxiii. 2. *Le Monde*, says the eloquent
Saurin, with great energy, Serm. Tome 9. p. 121,
n'est point votre Législateur; il ne sera pas votre Juge:
&c. That is, The World is not your Lawgiver,
nor shall it be your Judge: it is Jesus Christ, not
the World, that shall judge you. It is the mo-
rality of Jesus Christ, not that of the World, which
you ought to follow.

† Paradise Lost, B. 5. p. 896, &c.

Jewish Pharisees in the time of our Lord †; but it is as certain, there may be an improper fondness for *Concealment*. We are liable to err on both sides. We are not ostentatiously to display our Piety, nor improperly to hide it: we are faulty the first way, when we affect to show what might be *as well* concealed; we *improperly hide* our Religious Disposition, when we neglect practising a virtue, because it cannot be practised without being seen, or omit making some declaration God enjoins us to make, because this would be to declare what we would keep secret. We are *to believe with the heart*, it is to be remembered; and *with the mouth make confession to Salvation*; and it is to be remarked, that in the same Sermon of our Lord, in which he reproved the *Parade* of the Pharisees, he told his Disciples *that they were the Light of the World, that they were like a City set on an Hill, which could not be hid*||, and commanded them *to let their Light so shine before men, that they might see their Good Works, and glorify their Father in Heaven*§. They were then to practise Virtues that were *conspicuous*, as well as those that could be concealed; and they were to *profess* Faith in Christ, and to *endeavour to diffuse it through the world*, yea at the expence of *Suffering**, as well as *inwardly to believe*. To think then of *absolute, universal Privacy and Concealment* is inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel, and a *Weakness, not a Virtue*.

The Dread of falling away from that *strictness of life* we are sensible the Gospel requires,
and

† See Matt. vi, and many other places.

|| Matt. v. 14. § ver. 16. * ver. 10, 11.

and of the *scandal* that in such a case would follow, makes no alteration in the case: it should make us *cautious*, and earnestly to pray we may be kept from falling; but we ought not to suffer such a dread to cancel and annul any precept of the Gospel. *Fear*, kept within due bounds, may be useful, *happy is the man that feareth alway* *; but *Caution* itself may be excessive: and it certainly is so, when an apprehension of *possible consequences* deters us from obeying an order, which God positively requires us to observe.

5. *Mere Bashfulness* is sometimes the sole cause of this neglect.

Yet this hardly deserves to be mentioned: since though it may give pain, and sometimes perhaps in a considerable degree, yet this timidity is almost *constantly* broken through to gain some advantage, or avoid some inconvenience, in worldly affairs; and we must be ashamed to admit this, which is undoubted fact, and yet suffer it to prevail over us in a matter, in which the honour of God and our usefulness and comfort are so *deeply* concerned: What can such think of those words, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels?” Mark viii. 38. Our strength is small indeed if we faint here: what do we think of confessing Christ in suffering times? A *little Resolution* would go a *great way* in this case.

Give

* Prov. xxviii. 14.

Give me leave to add, that the forming *Friendships* with serious persons, that have been introduced into sacred fellowship, would greatly assist you in passing through such transactions on the one hand; and on the other, that Ministers and Churches should take care to remove all unnecessary discouragements. It may be reasonably hoped that in general, at least, they do, and that the contrary notion is rather a mere *pretence*, of which, perhaps, we may not be sufficiently aware, to soften the reproaches of an accusing Conscience, than a complaint founded in Truth: however it is with a very ill grace that we plead this, when we do not make the requisite enquiries, but satisfy ourselves with mere *surmise*. It is extremely wrong, and highly disadvantageous to keep our thoughts in concealment, month after month, year after year, with a good deal of distressing perplexity, when the encouragements of private friendship, and the explanations of the Ministers of Christ, would, perhaps, give *instant* relief: in a multitude of cases, they certainly would.

6. In some particular situations, this not engaging in the solemnity I am now discoursing about, may arise from a doubtfulness which Christian Society we should prefer, as most proper for us to join with, out of two or more within our reach.

But is this indeterminateness ever to continue? If they differ only in trifling matters, or merely in the personal qualifications of their Ministers, a great regard should be paid to *nearness*. If in doctrinal points, or in religious manage-

managements of *apprehended* considerable importance, examine those matters with all the candor and exactness you are masters of, and unite with that society that appears to you the best to support *divine truth*, or *evangelical order*. You may alter, perhaps you may say, your sentiments hereafter. You may, undoubtedly: but such an alteration may not at all make it necessary to quit the society you may happen to be connected with. St. Paul supposes an imperfection of Knowledge and after Improvements, in Phil. iii. 15, yet supposes that notwithstanding this, Christians should unite together, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing," ver. 16. And if, on the contrary, the alteration in your views of things, should be so great as to be inconsistent with your continuance in your former station, or at least *extremely* uncomfortable, we may as well peaceably and honourably withdraw in such a case, as in the case of an alteration in the place or our abode. Let not therefore these future alterations, that may *possibly* happen, prevent your fulfilling the dying orders of your Lord: he perfectly well knew the changeableness that attends things in this world; and if liableness to change disqualifies for the fulfilling this command, he would never have given the precept.

7. But the great difficulty of all, and the most general cause of this non-attendance, of the religiously disposed, is, I apprehend, *Doubtfulness of mind whether they are real Converts of the Lord Jesus*, and such as he intended should

should *immediately*, and without any *farther intervening alteration* in them, attend this solemnity.

It must be allowed, that it was not the intention of Christ, that this solemn Commemoration should be open to every one that calls himself a Christian, or is so called by others, if St. Paul wrote under the direction of the Spirit of Jesus, for he says, 1 Cor. v. *close*, “ I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a Brother” (that is a Christian*) “ be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, *no not to eat.*—Therefore *put away from among yourselves* that wicked person.” It may be doubtful whether this *not eating* reaches to the intercourse of Civil Life, at least in our country, and our times, where eating together is not such a token of Union and Friendship as anciently in the East; but it reaches without dispute to the eating together in this *sacred Commemoration*, eating together as Brethren in the Lord. The Observation then of this Rite is not *immediately* required of All, not of All *called Christians*: the *openly immoral* are not invited thither.

The *secretly Immoral* are not to be *rejected* by the Churches of Christ, for they are to guide their managements under the influence of Charity—*that Charity that believeth all things, that hopeth all things* †; but though they are not to reject them, if they propose themselves, because it doth not appear to them that they are immoral, yet their own consciousness of their Immorality

D

rality

* See Ch. vi. 6,—vii. 15, 2 Thess. iii. 6, &c.

|| 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

rality opposes their coming to the Table of the Lord, for they themselves know they have *neither part nor lot in this matter**.

But what shall the *Doubtful* do? Those that truly feel *religious impressions*, and are not conscious of allowing themselves in any *settled course* of immoral practice; but have a consciousness of *various slips*, and much *Weakness* in every thing, and are full of Doubts and Fears? — May not, I would answer, a passage in the vth of the Acts of the Apostles determine this? Upon the Death of Ananias and Sapphira it is said, “ Great Fear came upon *all the Church*, “ and upon as many as *heard* these things— “ And they” (the Apostles, or the Church,) “ were with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. “ And of the rest” (those that were in circumstances resembling those of Ananias and Sapphira, conscious that they would be guilty of known Falshood in making profession of the Religion of Christ) “ durst no man join himself to them : but the people magnified them. “ And Believers were *the more added to the Lord*, “ multitudes both of Men and Women.”— *Fear*, an awful apprehension of the displeasure of God against conscious Insincerity and Falshood, and its bitter consequences, came upon *All*, the *Church* itself, but not so as to prevent *multitudes from being added to the Lord*, though *many* of them, doubtless, were very imperfect in knowledge and in Grace as well as you. Let it be remembered Christ Jesus receives, and orders his Churches to receive, *the Weak as well as the Strong*, Rom. xiv. 1, & Ch xv. 1, 7.

The

* Acts viii. 21.

The keeping up these Commemorations of the Death of Christ is of great consequence in various views : the *openly immoral* are however to be forbidden to attend ; the *secretly immoral* are to be kept back by their own consciences ; the *doubtful concerning the real state of their souls* should, certainly, *give all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure*||, that their Consolation and Joy in attending might be full † ; but it doth not appear, from any declarations of Scripture, that if they should not be owned of God at last, this concern of their's to do honour to Christ, by keeping up this Memorial of his Death, as far as in them lies, shall be imputed to them as *criminal*, and especially so as to draw after it the *severest vengeance*. However as the *Confidence* of holy Hope is necessary to fullness of Consolation, and may appear to some minds, notwithstanding what I have been saying, necessary to persuade them to attend this solemnity, I would endeavour to represent, in a distinct Address, somewhat at large, the grounds and evidences of a well-founded Hope, which may be the most effectual means I can employ, to dissipate these anxieties : How happy shall I be, if the Spirit of Illumination and Comfort may attend my meditations, and bless them to my Readers !

D 2

A D-

|| 2 Pet. i. 10.

† John xv. 11.



ADDRESS II.

RELATING TO THE EVIDENCES OF A GRACIOUS HOPE.




 HERE is undoubtedly such a thing

 as *thinking one's self to be something,*

 when in reality we are nothing, but de-

 ceive ourselves : for St. Paul has ex-
 pressly mentioned this case *; and great num-
 bers have found themselves, by after illumina-
 tions, to have answered this description in the
 times preceding these convictions†. Mr. Man-
 ning, in the book mentioned by me in my pre-
 fatory letter, distinguishes these persons by the
 term *Hypocrite*, as many other devout writers
 of that age did ; but it sounds harshly in our
 ears, and no wonder, since we, in our times,
 under-

* Gal. vi. 3.

† So among many others did St. Paul, Rom. vii. 9, "I was alive without the Law once : but when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died." These words have been commonly supposed to express this case, but whether they do or not, the Fact itself, as to St. Paul, is indisputable.

understand by that term, a *Dissembler in Morality or Religion*, and such an one only. There are such most certainly: but the persons St. Paul meant, in the above cited passage, *deceived themselves*, and did not *knowingly dissemble*. I shall therefore instead of the term *Hypocrite*, use the term *self-deceiving Professor*, or something of that sort, to distinguish persons of this character from the *true Converts of Christ*, or those whom he calls his *Disciples indeed*.

Instead of multiplying particulars also, it must be advantageous in a matter of such consequence, and where *precision* and *brevity* are so necessary, to confine our Enquiries to those matters that the Scriptures mention as *turning points*, and at the same time are *distinct* from each other. They are such matters as these, concerning which it will be requisite to examine ourselves.

First, Our Repentance. “ Repent ye therefore and be converted, that *your Sins may be blotted out*, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, Acts iii. 19. There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth, Luke xv. 10. It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached, in his name, among All nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Ch. xxiv. 46, 47. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.” Acts xi. 18.

Sweet words these! Repentance is followed by Forgiveness and Life: but have we been

D 3

brought

H See Dr. Johnson's celebrated Dictionary.

§ John viii. 31.

brought to *this* Repentance? There may, possibly, be something that looks like Repentance, but is not so. Is what I have been willing to take to be Repentance true, should the examining Soul enquire, and such as is unto life?

The Tendencies to Repentance, and what may be mistaken for it, are such as these,

1st. One that is not a true Penitent "may be so far sensible of his Sin, and the Misery that is likely to come upon him, that he may complain of his sad condition to others, desiring them to counsel and advise him, and to pray for him: for thus Simon the Sorcerer and Pharaoh did†." Acts viii. 24. *Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.* Exod. viii. 8. *Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the Frogs from me: and I will let the People go.* Ver. 15. *But when Pharaoh saw there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not to them.* Again, Exod. ix. 27, 28. *Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go.* Ver. 34. *And when Pharaoh saw that the Rain, and the Hail, and the Thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.*

2dly. Such

† Manning, p. 16. N. B. This and the following quotations are not exact to a word: they frequently abridge the passages, and here and there may alter a term, but they carefully express the sense.

2dly. Such an one may not only acknowledge his Sinfulness, and beg the Prayers of Ministers and serious Christians, but “ he may
 “ grieve, and mourn, fast and pray, for so
 “ Ahab did*.” 1 Kings xxi. 27. *It came to pass when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.*

3dly. He may go farther, he may not only mourn, but there may be some alteration in his conduct, “ *He may turn from some sins, as open*
 “ *prophaneness, and scandalous vices, to civil*
 “ *honesty, and an outward shew of Piety and*
 “ *Holiness*: thus Simon, who was a Sorcerer,
 “ turned from his wicked practices and deeds,
 “ which he wrought by the help of the devil,
 “ and so professed Christ, as that he was bapti-
 “ zed by Philip, yet afterward Peter told him
 “ openly, *I perceive that thou art yet in the Gall*
 “ *of Bitterness, and bond of Iniquity.* Acts viii.
 “ 23§. Such an one may even be brought to
 “ do many things, that are in themselves good
 “ and commendable, and that by the preaching
 “ of the word, as *Herod* was, and yet prove
 “ quite naught, yea a Persecutor of the people
 “ of God||. Mark vi. 20. *Herod feared John,*
 “ *knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and*
 “ *observed him, and when he heard him, he did*
 “ *many things, and heard him gladly.*

4. Yea a consciousness of guilt may bitterly gall the Soul, and pain it even to *desperation*, and yet its Repentance not be unto life: “ Thus
 “ Judas Iscariot was vexed and troubled, for
 “ betraying his Lord and Master, and there-
 “ fore

* Manning, p. 16. § p. 27. || ib.

“ fore it is said, Matt. xxvii. 3, He *repented* himself. But it was in a carnal way and manner, for he, afterward, went away and hanged himself; and so added one sin to another, miserably destroying himself.*”

There may be then *some Reformation*, and the *Vehemence of Sorrow*, and yet not *Repentance unto life*. How then, it may be asked, is saving Repentance to be distinguished from what is not so? It may be answered:

1st. By the *Principle* from which it arises. Not *merely* a dread of punishment here or hereafter, for a man may feel the dread of either of these, or of both, and yet love sin as well as ever, and consequently be entirely unrenewed: there is nothing above mere Nature in a dread of pain. But *along* with this, which is just enough in itself, should be, a gracious Remorse for our past sins, arising from the Love of God, who has declared himself ready to forgive the *repenting sinner*. For the Love of God being the *first and great* commandment, Matt. xxii. 37, 38, if any Repentance at all be acceptable, that which springs from this noblest of principles must be so; and accordingly we find our Lord Jesus himself pronouncing the *Absolution* of a great Sinner on the account of her Love, “ Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much, Luke vii. 47.”

2dly. The *powerfulness* of its operation is a thought that ought to be joined to the preceding. It is not a Remorse without Efficacy, as to the forsaking of sin, that can give true consolation to the soul: there must be a forsaking

faking our sins in general, and particularly the sins that heretofore reigned over us. " He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper : but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh ſhall have mercy," ſaith the great penitential Preacher of Iſrael, Prov. xxviii. 13; nor doth the doctrine of the Apoſtles of Jeſus vary from this, I ſhewed, ſays St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 20, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and *do works meet for Repentance*. The ſenſe that we ought not to diſpleaſe our Maker, who gave us al] our powers of Action and Thought, is ſo ſtrongly wrought in the human frame; its being ſo very clear, to a conſiderate mind, that *his Commandments are not grievous* †; and the exquisite-
neſs of the deſcriptions given us of God, as Jehovah, *God Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin**, tend ſo much to impreſs the ſoul, that it would be no wonder *ſomething of this Remorſe* ſhould be felt, where the ſoul is not effectually turned to God. But where it is ſo powerful as to break off from our paſt willful ſins, and is

3dly, The abiding, general temper of the ſoul, we may be ſatisfied of the truth and evangelicalneſs of our Repentance, for this deſcription muſt be allowed to take in the whole of the caſe deſcribed in the 7th of Luke, *gracious Remorſe, forſaking ſin in general* and particularly thoſe that before had moſt prevailed over her, and the *Continuance* of this alteration in her. " If ye continue in my word," ſays Chriſt, " then

† 1 John v. 3.

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

“ then are ye my disciples indeed,” John viii. 31; and so the spirit of Christ, speaking in one of the old testament prophets§, describeth true Repentance, “ Repent, and turn from
 “ all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not
 “ be your Ruin. Cast away from you all
 “ your transgressions, whereby ye have trans-
 “ gressed, and make you a new heart, and a
 “ new spirit, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

How blessed are those that are conscious they are brought to such a Repentance !

Secondly, Let us next examine ourselves concerning our Faith in the Lord Jesus.

When St. Paul preached the *Gospel* unto men, *he preached Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*†; just as the preachers of Righteousness in former times called upon sinners, *to cease to do evil, and learn to do well*‡. Having then endeavoured to assist you in judging of your Repentance, it will be proper to go on, and consider well the nature of Faith in Christ, which is made by the Lord Jesus, the great distinction between his true Disciples and the rest of the world, in many passages of the new testament, and particularly in that solemn prayer which is recorded in the 17th of John, “ I pray for them: I pray not
 “ *for the world*, but for them which thou hast
 “ given me, for they are thine. Neither pray
 “ I for these ~~alone~~, but for them also *which*
 “ *shall believe in me through their word*||.”

How-

§ 1 Pet. i. 11. † Acts xx. 21. ‡ Is. i. 16, 17.
 || John xvii. 9, 20.

However, something *like* Faith persons may have, who will not be acknowledged by Christ hereafter as his.

1. Such "may assent (in general) * to the " truths contained in the word of God," and feel no anxious doubtfulness about them. So we read, " John ii. 23, 24, 25, When he was " in Jerusalem at the passover on the feast-day, " many *believed in his name*, when they saw " the miracles which he did. But Jesus did " not commit himself unto them, *because he " knew all men*, and needed not that any should " testify of man: for he knew what was in " man. So Simon Magus *believed*, and when " he was baptized continued with Philip, " and wondered, beholding the miracles and " signs which were done, yet he was one who " was in the gall of bitterness, and the bond " of iniquity." Acts viii. 23.

2. One

* Manning says, p. 33, *All the Truths contain-* ed in the word of God; but as this may be contested, and is by no means necessary to affirm, nor is supported by the instances produced, I have limited the expression: answerable to which our Lord says of the Jews, John v. close, " There is one that " accuseth you, even Moses, *in whom ye trust*. " For had you *believed* Moses, ye would have be- " lieved me: for he wrote of me. But if ye be- " lieve not his writings, how shall ye believe my " words?" They believed the Revelation of God by Moses, as to *many things*, therefore they are said to *trust* in him, but they did not believe *all* that he wrote, if they had, they would have be- lieved in Jesus. Such is the argument, and a si- milar description suits many nominal Christians.

2. One that is not a true christian “may joy
 “and rejoice in the Truth, as the stony-ground
 “hearers who received the word with joy,
 “(Matt. xiii. 20;) and Herod, who heard John
 “Baptist gladly†. (Mark vi. 20.)

3dly. Such an one “may contend and dis-
 “pute for the Truth, believing that what he
 “holds, and doth assert, is the very Truth of
 “God. Yea he may so far be persuaded of
 “the verity of what is delivered in the word
 “of God, as to be willing to lay down his life
 “for the Truth, as the Apostle’s saying, 1 Cor.
 “xiii. 3, doth imply*”—*Though I give my Body
 to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me
 nothing.*

All this is true: the alledged passages prove it; and the ground of these assertions will appear, and the Soul that truly believes in Jesus filled with a more *distinct* Hope, if this matter is traced back a proper length.

Let us begin with the Apostle’s Definition of Faith in the most general sense of that term, Heb. xi. 1, which is extremely clear, as it is justly translated by some of the learned, *Faith is the confident Expectation of things hoped for, the Conviction of things not seen*||. Faith or Belief, in general, relates to things *future*, or those that are *past*, or *present*, but of whose existence we are not assured by our Senses.

If we believe that they have been, are, or will be, *upon Testimony*, this is Faith more *properly* speaking.

Faith

† Ib. p. 35.

* Ib. p. 34, 35.

|| See Dr. Doddridge’s *Fam. Expof.* In our version the words are, *Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen.*

Faith and Belief are words of like import : but if this persuasion on testimony, concerning unseen or future things, relates to matters that do not concern Religion, we, I think, commonly use the term *Belief*; if the contrary, we frequently use the term *Faith*. Faith then, or belief of the religious kind, is, to *most* men, a persuasion of the truth of future or unseen things, founded immediately, or mediately, on the testimony given to them by messengers sent from God : *ultimately* therefore, on his Veracity.

If our Faith doth not produce effects, suitable and correspondent to what we profess to believe, it is, in the language of St. James, a *dead Faith*, “ As the body without the Spirit “ is dead, so *Faith without Works is dead also*,” ch. ii. 26. Our Faith then not to be vain must be *influential*, or, in other words, must influence to a correspondent practice.

If we believe in this manner the Gospel, (to come to Faith in Christ in particular) a *life of Holiness* will be the consequence : for *the Grace of God* (or the Gospel of God's Grace, which is apparently what is meant there) *that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, in this present Evil world.* Tit. ii. 11. 12. And accordingly, the Belief of the Gospel, as preached by St. Paul, is supposed by him to be *sanctifying* : being sent to men, “ To open their “ eyes, and to turn them from darkness to
E light,

§ I say to *most* men : for the Prophets themselves received those things as true, from the immediate testimony of God.

“ light, and from the power of Satan unto
 “ God, that they may receive forgiveness of
 “ sins, and inheritance among them which are
 “ *sanctified by Faith that is in Christ,*” Acts xxvi.
 18; and to dispose men to the practice of “ *All*
 “ *Godliness and Honesty,*” 1 Tim. ii. 2.

Farther, as Love to God *is the first and great commandment**, and is *essential* therefore to *Evangelical Repentance*, or the Repentance the Gospel requires||, so is it also essential to *Evangelical Obedience*: and accordingly Faith in the Gospel is supposed by St. Paul to work *by Love*, Gal. v. 6, “ For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but *Faith which worketh by Love.*” And if it be true, as St. John seemeth plainly to suppose, that our Love is particularly excited by the demonstrations of God’s Love to us—“ *We love him because he first loved us,*” a living Faith in the Gospel must greatly excite Love in us to God, and by that means, *affectionate and enlarged obedience*; for God is therein set before us in most exquisite representations of his Grace and Mercy, *God having commended his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us,* Rom. v. 8.

Extensive and Elevated as this Obedience may be, Faith in Christ will produce *very deep Humility*. We find St. Paul *opposing Faith to Works* in his writings: “ Where is *Boasting* then? It is excluded. By what law? Of *Works*? Nay: but by the Law of Faith.” Rom. iii. 27. “ If by Grace, then is it no
 “ more

* Matt. xxii. 38. || See the preceding Article.

† 1 John iv. 19.

“ more of Works: otherwise Grace is no
 “ more Grace. But if it be of Works, then
 “ is it no more Grace: otherwise Work is no
 “ more Work.” Rom. xi. 6. *Deep Humility*
 then seems to be essential to Faith in Christ,
 since it excludes *Boasting*, and receives Salva-
 tion as of Grace. And if our Faith in the
 Gospel is influential, this effect must be pro-
 duced, for Christ Jesus teaches us there, *that*
if a Master thanks not his Servant because he did
the things that were commanded him, so likewise we,
when we shall have done all those things which are
commanded us, ought to say, We are unprofitable
servants; we have done that which was our duty
to do. And thus he opposes the *Humiliation* of
 the poor Publican, who stood afar off, and would
 not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote
 upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a*
Sinner†, to the Confidence of the vain-glorious
 Pharisee, who boasted of his performances.
 Christ teaches us that all our Hope is founded
 on the divine *Mercy* shown to the *Unworthy*.

At the same time, the Gospel directs to hope
 for the effects of the Mercy of God, *through*
the Blood of Jesus. This is the teaching of the
 New Testament: *We joy in God through our*
Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received
the Atonement, Rom. v. 11. The Scriptures
 are full of this thought, and it is taught in the
 commemoration of his death—“ He took the
 “ Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them,
 “ saying, Drink ye All of it; for this is my
 “ Blood of the New Testament, which is shed
 “ for many, for the Remission of Sins,” Matt.

E 2

xxvi.

|| Luke xvii. 9, 10. † Ch. xviii. 13.

xxvi. 27, 28. That *Faith in Christ* then which St. Paul preached, must be understood to have a reference to this great point, and accordingly we find that Apostle expressly mentioning *Faith in his Blood*, and that as propitiating: "Whom God hath set forth to be a *Propitiation*," (or rather a *Propitiatory*, as the original Word is known to signify, where God appears propitious, not by having Incense burnt before him, or some other ceremony performed, but) "through *Faith in his Blood*, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26.

So then the Faith in Christ which St. Paul preached, was such a belief of the Gospel, as disposed to the practice of *All Godliness and Honesty*; from a principle of Love; mingled with a very deep *Humility*; and a trusting in the Mercy of God, exercised to Sinners through the atoning blood of Jesus.

To resume these things, for the purpose of *Self-Examination* concerning our Faith: if we believe nothing but what is an Object of Sense, we are to the last degree *profane and impious*, for then we shall not acknowledge the *Being of a God*, which St. Paul derives from Faith, understanding that term in the most general sense of the word: *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. xi. 6; if we receive the Truths of Natural Religion, or the deductions of Reason from what we see, but admit not the Revelations of God, we are nothing

nothing more than *Deists*; if we receive the teachings of Revelation, but so as that they do not influence our Practice, our Faith is *vain*, for it is *dead*, in the language of St. James, and hardly deserves the name at all— People then may give their *Assent* to the Truths of God, and yet not be true Converts to Christ; and if our Faith is *influential in some respects*, but fails in *essential* points, our *Faith must still be vain*, *we are yet in our Sins*. This will be very generally allowed with respect to a Moral or a Virtuous Life: without which though we should feel a *pleasure* in hearing the Christian Doctrine of a Future State, &c, and should even give our bodies to be burned for the Profession of the Gospel*, it would not avail to our Salvation. If Love to God as a *principle of obedience*; if the *Exclusion of Boasting*, and looking for Salvation from Free-Grace; and trusting in the *atoning virtue* of the Blood of Christ; are *essential* too, the same must be said of a Faith that reaches not to these matters. But if we should not take upon us to determine that they are, I think it is apparent that they are *matters of moment*, and therefore it cannot be amiss for the Devout to enquire how far their Faith has a relation to these things.

We might, perhaps not improperly, stop here, and confine ourselves to these two points in our Examinations, as St. Paul represents these two things— Repentance towards God and Faith in the Lord Jesus, as the great Subjects of *his* Ministry: but as the Evidence of a gracious change of Heart derived from *Love to*

E 3

Good

Good Men has been thought to be so consolatory, and at the same time is so liable to be misunderstood; as making conscience of our secret thoughts, is mentioned by Mr. Manning, and is one great distinction which our Lord makes, in his Sermon on the Mount, between his Morality and *that of the Pharisees*; and as the Effects of an Evangelical Hope are so different from those of an hope that is vain; I beg leave not to discontinue this Address, 'till I have examined these three points. I would say then,

Thirdly, Love to Good men is a matter about which it may become us, with *strictness* to examine ourselves, as numbers have thought this one of the *most consolatory* points of self-examination, and is very liable to be misunderstood.

St. John says, 1 Ep. ch. iii. ver. 14, "We know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren," or love the Disciples of Christ, for *Brethren*, in the style of the New Testament, frequently means Christians. It is unnecessary to produce the proofs of this Assertion, it is allowed by All. But,

1. One that is not a true Convert of Christ, "may love the People of God for some *outward* and *temporal Good* that he hath by them; but not because of the Good, Grace and Holiness, that he seeth in them*." Our Lord has expressly determined that something more than this is required of his Disciples: "If ye love them which *love you*, what thank have

* Manning, p. 59.

“ have you? for sinners also love those that
 “ love them. And if ye do Good to them
 “ which *do Good to you*, what thank have ye?
 “ for Sinners also do even the same.” Luke
 vi. 32, 33.

2. Such an one may go farther : without receiving any benefits from them of the *lucrative* kind, he may love them as being of the same *Religious Denomination* with himself, and his regard for them may be nothing more than *Party-Love*. The Samaritans were wrong in some of their principles, and *Salvation was of the Jews**, but the Love of a Jew to the Jewish Nation in general, or to *their Prophets* and those of the most venerable characters among them, was no proof of their being *sanctified*, and true disciples of Moses : “ Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, because ye build the Tombs
 “ of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of
 “ the Righteous—Ye Serpents, ye generation
 “ of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation
 “ of Hell§?” We then may feel a warm attachment to that Religious Party to which we belong, and venerate Eminent persons among them, and do nothing more than these Jews did, whom our Lord dooms to Hell. It may be merely the *Spirit of Party*, which is only a more refined kind of *Selfishness*, as it is well known, that human nature is ready to appropriate to itself, in some measure, the glory that arises from any thing honourable among those with whom we are connected. And our Zeal for our own Religious Party, may, and often does, make men uncharitable and bitter towards those that differ from them.

Thirdly.

* John iv. 22. § Matt. xxiii. 29, 33.

Thirdly. We may go still farther, and yet find nothing distinguishing us from many of the People of the World, or do any thing more than others, and that is, when we love *virtuous characters in general*, wherever we see them : without deriving any secular advantage from them; or being touched with the honour they do the Party to which they belong. For we may feel this without being disposed to *follow their Example*; and consistently with a Spirit of *private Vengeance against those of an unworthy character*, which yet the Gospel forbids||. So the Apostle describes some of the wicked Jews as *knowing God's Will, and approving those things that were excellent, being instructed out of the Law*, Rom. ii. 18. The true Converts of Jesus approve those things that are excellent †, but not they only.

We cannot then know that we are *passed from death to life*, because we feel *some kind of Love to the Brethren*, but then when we feel *such a sort of love as answers that St. John is there describing*. Thus, in like manner, this Apostle speaks of Alms-giving as demonstrating that those that practise it are of the Truth, and as sufficient to assure the heart before God, 1 Ep. iii. 18, 19, “ My little Children, let us not
 “ love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in
 “ Deed and in Truth. And hereby we know
 “ that we are of the Truth, and shall assure
 “ our Hearts before him ;” yet St. Paul affirms that it is possible *a man may bestow All his Goods to feed the Poor, and also give his Body to be burned**, and yet not be profited by so doing. It cannot

|| Matt. v. 44, 45. † Phil. i. 10. * 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

cannot then possibly be, that all sorts of Alms-giving *may assure the heart before God*, for the Apostles of Jesus do not contradict each other, such a supposition being absolutely inconsistent with their writing under the direction of the Spirit of Truth, and consequently those words of St John, must be restrained to Alms-giving *in those circumstances* the Apostle intended; and the same is to be said of that *Love of the Brethren*, which I am now considering.

A proper attention to the *Views* of the Apostle, in writing this Epistle, will enable us to determine this with full satisfaction.

1. St. John supposes an adhering to the Doctrine and Fellowship of the Apostles, where he pronounces these words of Consolation. "Beloved," says the Apostle, "Believe not every Spirit, but *try* the Spirits whether they are of God: because many False Prophets are gone out into the world—We are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error," ch. iv. 1, 6. "Little Children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. *They went out from us*, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us," ch. ii. 18, 19. It is manifest from hence, that those to whom St. John intended to give the consolation of holy Hope,

Hope, were such as, in this time of apostatizing from the Doctrine of Christ, continued steadfastly in the *profession of the Doctrine of the Apostles*, and consequently in their *Fellowship*.

2. St. John supposes, Christ's being a Propitiation for the Sins of the *Gentiles* that repented and believed the Gospel, as well as of the Jews, was a Doctrine of the Apostles, and that consequently these believing *Jews and Gentiles* ought to love one another. The following passages of this Epistle prove this Assertion. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the Sins of the *whole world*," ch. ii. 1, 2. God "sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to *love one another*," ch. iv. 10, 11. St. John in this epistle appears to be speaking concerning the *Gentiles*, their being made *Partakers of the Salvation of Christ*, without the Observance of the *Mosaic Ceremonial Laws*, (for the most bigotted Jew would have allowed their Salvation if they conformed to those Laws*,) and that in consequence of the Mercy of God to *these Gentiles*, there ought to be a mutual love between the Jewish and Gentile Converts to Christ. The Hatred of their Brethren, which this Apostle so often speaks of, seems to refer to that dislike to each other, especially of the *Jewish* Converts to their Gentile Brethren, to which there are so many references in Scripture; and the departure of many from the Fellowship of the Apostles, and following after
False

* Gal. v. 11.

False Prophets, or Antichrists, seems to be owing to their not abandoning from the heart the prejudices of their Nation, relating to an *Earthly* Kingdom of the Messiah, "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world," and the world heareth them," ch. iv. 5†; with which prejudices the Gentile Converts were little, or not at all, infected, a circumstance which doubtless increased the dislike of these false disciples of Jesus, to those that were converted to the faith from among the Gentiles. In opposition to all this he requires Love to their Brethren, whether Jews or Gentiles, as an *Essential* point: "He that loveth not, *knoweth not* God; for God is love. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him—he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," ch. iv. 8—11. If God so loved us as to send his Son to be a Propitiation for Jews and Gentiles, believing Jews and Gentiles should love one another, he that doth not love, knoweth not God, having not just and evangelical views of God, for God is Love, Love to Jews and Gentiles both.

3. This Love, to be admitted to be *genuine and sincere*, must appear, according to the Apostle, not merely in *words*, but in *correspondent*

‡ Perhaps those words of the 2d ch. (ver. 15.) have a particular reference to this worldly-mindedness of the Jewish nation, "Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him."

dent actions. " We ought to lay down our
 " lives for the Brethren. But whoso hath
 " this world's Good, and seeth his Brother
 " have need, and shutteth up his bowels of
 " Compassion from him, how dwelleth the
 " Love of God in him? My little Children,
 " let us not love in word, neither in tongue,
 " but in deed and in truth. And hereby we
 " know that we are of the Truth, and shall
 " assure our hearts before him," ch. iii. 16—
 19. They that continued in the Doctrine of
 the Apostles could not but admit that believ-
 ing Jews and Gentiles were one body in Christ,
 but such a profession might be made with the
tongue, where the heart remained in its *former*
state, which the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle
 to Titus, describes after this manner, " We
 " ourselves also were sometimes foolish, diso-
 " bedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and
 " pleasures, living in malice and envy, *bate-*
 " *ful and hating one another*," ch. iii. 3. In
 opposition to this secret dislike and enmity,
 St. John requires visible and substantial proofs
 of Affection and Love, declaring that he that
 hated his Brother, whether it was a Gentile
 Convert that hated a believing Jew, or a be-
 lieving Jew a Gentile Convert, he was in a
state of death: he that loveth not his brother,
 abideth in death, 1 John iii. 14*.

Along

* We may see by what happened in the Chris-
 tian Church, presently after the death of our Lord,
 the importance of requiring these effectual proofs
 of Love to those that professed the Faith of Christ,
 but whose preceding circumstances excited *dislike*,
 since in the distribution of the Alms of the Church

4. Along with all this, and inseparable from it, St. John supposed a *life of sanctification in other respects*, or a *Conformity to God in his Moral perfections*, absolutely necessary, which he had previously declared, in the very beginning of his Epistle, and which therefore was considered by him as involved in these after passages.

“ This then is the Message which we have
 “ heard of him, and declare unto you, that
 “ God is Light, and in him is no darkness at
 “ all. If we say we have fellowship with him,
 “ and walk in darkness (that is in the practise
 “ of the works of darkness,) *we lie*, and do not
 “ the Truth : But if we walk in the Light, *as*
 “ *he is in the Light*, we have Fellowship one
 “ with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ
 “ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin,” ch. i. 5,
 6, 7. Vain then is all hope, founded on this
 declaration of the Apostle, *that we are passed*
from death to life because we love the Brethren, if
 we live in the practise of known wilful sin,
 for this is walking in darkness, and we have
 not Fellowship with God. Vain too our Alms-
 givings, however *magnificent* ; yea vain would
 be our *dying for the Brethren*, if we should thus
 walk in Darkness : St. John had declared it
 at first, and he supposed it to be remembered,

F and

then, the Widows of the Hellenistic Jews, or of the Jews who had lived among the Greeks, and spoke their language, were *neglected*, though they were as much the Seed of Abraham, as those that spoke *Hebrew* : if such an invidious distinction was made among the *Jewish* Converts themselves, what danger was there of taking too little notice of those believers in Christ who were of Gentile Origin ?
 See Acts vi. 1.

and that these latter Assertions would not be understood to be a cancelling and annulling this first, and most essential declaration of his.

If we admit the several propositions I have been deducing from this first Epistle of John, we shall have, I think, the most *clear and complete* explanation of this Assertion of the Apostle, *that those are passed from Death to Life that love the Brethren*, as also *that the ministring to the wants of the poor Saints, demonstrates that such are of the Truth*, and that it may assure their hearts before God: consequently, that when we would apply the first of these things to ourselves, we should consider, whether we love truly and sincerely All those that have *Fellowship with the Apostles* of Christ, by receiving from the heart their writings as the Teachings of God, tho' there may be some differences between us and them not very agreeable to our Prejudices; whether we not only *profess* love to them, but are giving them the most *substantial proofs* of our brotherly affection, not only as *Men*, but as *Christians*, as we have opportunity; and join with this love to our Fellow-Christians of *different denominations*, a walking in *all holiness of life*, being followers of God as his Children. If we do this, we are certainly passed from Death to Life: this is *true Love to the Brethren*, and a *blessed zeal* for the Cause of Christ in the world.

In like manner admitting these several propositions to be true, then our Almsgiving will be answerable to what St. John mentions, and will show we are of the Truth, when we relieve All to our power, as Fellow-Christians, when they receive the writings of the Apostles as the words,

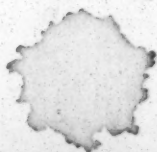
words of God, though differently minded in some points, and which may contradict some favourite prejudices of ours, and do what we can to promote the interests of Christ among them; and by this means we may assure our hearts before God that we are indeed truly the Disciples of Jesus. We are, it is true, to be beneficent, as we have opportunity, to All Men whatsoever, according to the Apostolic precept*, and our Lord's parable of the *Good Samaritan*†, but as we are *especially* to do good to those that are of the household of Faith, so we are to distinguish such as these as Fellow-Christians, though differently-minded in some things from us. A Jew, perhaps, in the vehemence of zeal, would have relieved an *Heathen* preferably to a *Samaritan*, though this last received *the law of Moses*, but in the disputes among Christians, we are not to act after a like manner, if we would follow this Instruction of St. John, and assure our hearts before God.

But if we cannot see sufficient ground for these *several* propositions, yet at least we must admit the last, and believe that St. John did not, could not possibly mean, that *Love to the Brethren* would avail, if our lives were *immoral*, or, in his language, if we walked in darkness in other respects; or the *most generous Almsgiving*; for this would be to make the Apostle inconsistent with himself, and ch. iii. 14. to contradict ch. i. 6. And if we admit this, it will be *sufficient*, as it will determine this important point, that no Love of the Brethren will prove our being passed from death to life,

F 2

which

* Gal. i. 10. † Luke x. 30—37.



which is not joined with *walking in the light*, or living *holily*; but to place the passage in the most perfect point of light, it may be requisite to attend to *all* the propositions I have drawn from this Epistle of St. John.

Fourthly, The making Conscience of the Thoughts of the Heart, is another point mentioned by Mr. Manning, in the close of his particulars relating to Self-Examination, and with great Propriety: for as this is a matter extremely distinguishing in itself, so it is made one of the distinctions between true virtue and its appearances, by our Lord, which he gives us in his Sermon on the Mount, in which he tells us, “ Except your Righteousness
“ shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes
“ and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into
“ the Kingdom of Heaven.” For he says there, “ Ye have heard that it was said by them
“ of old time, Thou shalt not commit Adul-
“ tery. But I say unto you, that whosoever
“ looketh on a Woman to lust after her,
“ hath committed adultery with her already *in*
“ *his Heart*,” Matt. v. 27, 28. A like distinction appears in the xxiii. of Matthew,
“ Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hy-
“ pocrites; for you make clean the *outside* of
“ the Cup and the Platter, but *within* they
“ are full of Extortion and Excess. Thou
“ blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is
“ within the Cup and Platter, that the out-
“ side of them may be clean also. Wo unto
“ you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for
“ ye are like unto whited Sepulchres, which
“ indeed appear beautiful *outward*, but are
“ *within* full of Dead Mens’ Bones, and of
“ all

“ *all uncleanness*. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but *within* ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” Ver. 25—28.

A man, says Manning*, may judge as much by his *Thoughts and Meditations* of his state and condition, as by any thing else. A sincere heart maketh conscience of it's thoughts, being humbled for them, if they be vain and tend to Evil: Lord! saith he, *What a wicked, vain heart have I! How many vain Thoughts, evil Affections, and Motions have my heart been pestered with this day! Thus he is ashamed before the Lord for the sinfulness of his Heart and Thoughts, and watcheth against them.*

But the Hypocrite, though he may have some regard to his Words and Ways, yet he seldom observes his heart, vain thoughts, foolish affections, and motions are running to and fro in his heart.

This is certainly just. Nothing is more discriminating than this: a thousand things besides a principle of Real Religion may make us attend to what appears outwardly, but it is only true Religion that engages to a diligent *Watchfulness* over the heart, which yet is so essential to Virtue, that not only doth our Lord Jesus require this, but the instruction was given under the less perfect dispensation of the Old Testament: “The *Thoughts of the Wicked* are an abomination to the Lord,” Prov. xv. 26; while on the contrary, the devout Psalmist says†, “I hate *vain Thoughts*, but thy Law do I love.” Even Heathen Moralists were not entirely strangers to the doctrine, though it no where appears in so elevated a purity as in the Teachings of Jesus.

F 3

Finally

* p. 92, 93. † Ps. cxix. 113.

Finally, It may be agreeable to examine ourselves farther, *concerning our Hope.*

An attending at the Table of the Lord is commonly understood to be expressive of *Hope*—that we *have* obtained the Remission of our Sins through the Blood of Christ; but numbers that are very serious have a very *wavering Hope*, and they are even afraid, an indulging any thing like a lively Hope concerning themselves, may be attended with unhappy consequences as to their after strictness of Life.

A very few words may, very possibly, be sufficient here. Gracious Hope is so far from being injurious to Religion in the soul, that on the contrary it is very beneficial: “This day is holy unto our Lord:” said Ezra to the Israelites, when the Book of the Law was read in the hearing of the people, that they might mourn their transgressions, and engage themselves with solemnity afresh to the observation of it, “neither be you sorry, for *the joy of the Lord is your strength,*” Neh. viii. 10. Had it been otherwise there would not have been such care taken by God, *that those might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before them,* Heb. vi. 18.

There are two things that distinguish the Hope of the true Christian, from that of the Soul that deceiveth itself—the Grounds of their Hope, and the Effects of it.

The last entertains Hope, for which he can give no *reasonable* account. Numbers are full of Hope when their *Animal Spirits* are brisk and vigorous

vigorous ; and they are overwhelmed with Distress when the contrary happens, and can give no reason for either : this is not Religion, but Bodily Constitution. The Hope of the Real Christian is built on the *word of God*. Again, he that is not truly a Christian, may go so far as to alledge some passage of scripture for his Hope, and that as brought into *remembrance with some particular force* : but the mere being brought into remembrance, is no proof that this was the Agency of the Spirit of Jesus, for though indeed it is a part of his work to bring things to remembrance, John xiv. 26, yet a passage of Scripture may be brought to mind by the natural force of the Memory, or, possibly, it may be the work of an Evil Spirit, as Satan, in our Lord's Temptation in the wilderness, is said to have caused a passage of scripture to come to his thoughts†, for purposes of mischief. Nor can the mere energy and vividness with which a passage comes to the mind, determine that it belongs to us, it is our *answering the description* of such a passage that must determine the point. Could the mere calling to mind those words of St. Paul, " In Christ " Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any " thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a New " Creature. And as many as walk according " to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God‡," give the soul just reason to conclude the Peace and Mercy of God belonged to it; let the recollection be ever so *forcible and vivid* ? No certainly ! the taking comfort from this passage can only arise

† Matt. iv. 6.

‡ Gal. vi. 15, 16.

arise from our feeling we are become *New Creatures*, for on them, and them only, St. Paul there pronounces Peace and Mercy, and it is not the *remembrance* of the passage, but the finding we are *made New Creatures*, that must enable us to take comfort from thence. To suppose the contrary, is evidently unreasonable, and would lay us open to the most *fatal deceptions*. So have I known a person, who was *visibly*, yea *notoriously* following the *Multitude to do evil*, gravely declare his strong hopes of Salvation, because those words of Christ were brought to his mind with a strong impression, "Fear not, *little Flock*: for it is your Father's "good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The man did not appear to be *mad*, in the common sense of that word, but was most assuredly a wretched self-deceiving, drunken *Enthusiast*.

The *Effect* also will distinguish a true from a vain Hope: "Every man," says St. John, "that hath this Hope in him, *purifieth* himself, "even as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3. If the Hope we entertain of Salvation gives us encouragement in Sin, or makes us calm in our neglecting to do the will of God, it is not an evangelical Hope, such as St. John describes; but is, we have reason to fear, a deception. If on the contrary it purifies the heart, we need be under no apprehensions from indulging it; or from attending the Commemorations of the Death of Christ, which we consider as expressive of holy Hope.

CONCLU-

Christ's dying love, and less impatient to observe the commands of the New Testament?

And as for you, Older or Younger, that have entered into Sacred Fellowship, labour to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," being *fruitful in every Good Work*, and *increasing in the Knowledge of God*||, that there may be *no occasion of Stumbling* in you; but on the contrary, that by maintaining great tenderness of Conscience, and growing in Usefulness and Hope, you may have at last an *abundant entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*§.

To this end, study well these Evidences of a Gracious Hope: the frequent reviewing them, may correct some Errors; may help to purify your Souls; may confirm and enliven your Hope.

Let not, however, this Care, important as it is in itself, and, undoubtedly, to be attended to in the first place, absorb all your attention: on the contrary, affectionately labour, at proper times, to plead the Cause of God with the *Immoral* and the *Thoughtless*; kindly assist those in whose minds, you may apprehend, there are *great warrings between the law of the mind and the law of the members**, or, in less sacred language, *great struggles between Vice and Virtue*; and encourage the *timid* and the *bashful* who have, you hope, received Christ Jesus the Lord†, publicly to devote themselves to God, to commemorate the Death of Christ, and to be complete in All the Will of God†.

Such

|| Col. i. 10. § 2 Pet. i. 11. * Rom. vii. 22, 23.
† Col. ii. 6. † ch. iv. 12.

Such are oftentimes forming very wrong notions concerning the *Rigidness* of our Churches*; and nothing will be more efficacious to dispel their Apprehensions on that head, as well as with respect to their own Sincerity in yielding up themselves to God, than communicating to them your own preceding *Feelings*, and how much less difficult and painful you have found the being introduced into sacred Fellowship, than you feared and expected. The truth of that Observation of Solomon has hardly ever been *more sensibly verified* than in this case, “As
“ in Water Face answereth to Face: so the
“ Heart of Man to Man.” Prov. xxvii. 19.

Your Ministers are not only speaking to you in Public and in Private on these Subjects, but have been desirous something might be written, which might remain in your hands, and be
con-

* The Churches and Ministers of Christ, are without doubt, by no means to drop their attention to that Discipline the New Testament enjoins, with the view merely of conciliating the minds of the *Wealthy and the Gay*, or to increase their *Numbers*, but they may, and if they think properly, will believe they *ought to explain*, and even occasionally, and in some cases wholly, to *alter*, such Modes of Management as may be found discouraging to the *truly sincere*, and which not being *expressly* directed by the New Testament, can only be thought to be *discretionary*, and consequently *alterable Arrangements*. Evangelical Discipline in the Churches is one of their Glories, but the Discipline that is Evangelical is indeed *strict*, but *compassionate and tender*: “Let All your things,” says St. Paul, “be done
“ with Charity.” 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

consulted whenever you please ; but I am well assured, no method will be so successful, especially amongst the Young, as the Conversations of the seriously-disposed with each other, on matters of this kind, which may be done in such a manner as by no means to transgress the rules of Decency and Order*, but on the contrary, may co-operate with the labours of the Ministers of Christ in the *happiest manner*. Such was the Practice of many of the most ancient Disciples of Christ†; and something very much like this obtained among Good People of still earlier times, which drew down from God himself an Eulogy of the Noblest kind, with which I would finish these papers. “ Then they that
 “ feared the Lord, spake often one to another ;
 “ and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a
 “ Book of Remembrance was written before
 “ him for them that feared the Lord, and that
 “ thought upon his Name. And they shall
 “ be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day
 “ when I make up my Jewels||.”

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40. † Phil. iv. 3, Rom. xvi. 3, 12.
 || Mal. iii. 16, 17.

THE END.

ERRATUM.

Page 48, Line 3, from the bottom, *for* present, but *read* without the comma.

7